



# Unfinished Business

More National Parks  
for Scotland



MEMBERS' DEBATE 24 MAY 2017

## PARLIAMENTARY BRIEFING

### What are National Parks?

- 'National Park' is the leading internationally-recognised designation for places of the highest national importance for natural or cultural heritage – including landscape, wildlife, recreation, historic environment and cultural traditions
- National Parks are exemplars of rural development which help to create jobs in remote rural areas alongside best-practice custodianship of natural assets
- There are over 3,500 National Parks in the world, including for example 29 in Norway and 14 in New Zealand, but Scotland has only two
- Some are truly wild places; many, including those in Scotland, are lived-in, working landscapes, where some of their special qualities derive from the ways in which land managers have cared for the landscape over the centuries
- The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000, which enables the Scottish Government to propose areas for designation, allows considerable flexibility in the design of National Parks, so that they can be tailored to local circumstances and needs
- The Act requires Scottish National Parks to pursue the sustainable economic and social development of local communities alongside conservation and recreation

### Existing National Parks

- Scotland has only two National Parks: Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, established in 2002, and Cairngorms National Park, established in 2003
- These have clearly demonstrated the value of the designation and achieved a great deal for their areas, including species recovery, repairing mountain paths, restoring peatlands, conserving native woodlands, supporting local businesses, generating jobs for young people, providing affordable housing, investing in sustainable rural development and growing the tourism industry whilst protecting the landscapes which visitors come to see

### Unfinished Business?

- Neither the Scottish Parliament nor the Scottish Government has ever said that only two areas in Scotland are worthy of National Park status
- The [Scottish Campaign for National Parks](#) (SCNP) and the [Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland](#) (APRS) have campaigned for more National Parks since 2010; our overall case is set out in our 2013 report [Unfinished Business](#)
- In 2015 we submitted a [Petition](#) to the Scottish Parliament's Public Petitions Committee and in 2015-16 we published four more detailed [topic reports](#) on specific aspects of the case for more National Parks
- We propose that at least [seven further areas](#) could be designated as National Parks and would benefit from that status: Ben Nevis/Glen Coe/Black Mount, the Cheviots, a Coastal and Marine National Park centred around Mull; Galloway; Glen Affric; Harris; and Wester Ross

### Governance

- National Parks in Scotland are governed by boards made up of directly-elected local people, local councillors and national experts

- Future National Parks in Scotland would not be as complex or costly as the first two, as they would mostly cover smaller areas and only one or two local Councils
- The 2000 Act provides great flexibility over planning – National Park Authorities can be given powers over development planning, development management, both or neither

#### Why Should Scotland Have More National Parks?

- World class scenery – Scotland has some of the finest scenery in the world, so will benefit greatly from having more parts of its countryside and coast recognised with the National Park brand
- Management and protection – key rural areas with fine natural scenery and habitats need protection, appropriate management and sympathetic public access and development; we should put plans and policies in place now to protect and enhance some of the key areas of Scotland’s countryside and coast
- Sustainable tourism – tourism makes a vital contribution to Scotland’s economy and is especially important in rural areas; the National Park brand attracts visitors and their spending, so more National Parks would boost the economy in the rural and coastal areas they cover
- Rural development – National Parks are good for business, not only for tourism-related businesses but also for small lifestyle companies based on sustainable use of natural resources such as timber, fish, wildlife or geology
- National identity – more National Parks would inspire pride and passion from local people and visitors alike, and would boost the image of Scotland worldwide by showing that the Scottish Government has positive policies and actions to protect and enhance the environment

#### Political and Public Support

- There is strong political support for more National Parks – four of the five political parties in the Scottish Parliament are in favour of more National Parks
- The SCNP/APRS campaign is supported by John Muir Trust, Mountaineering Scotland, National Trust for Scotland, Ramblers Scotland, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wild Land Group, Scottish Wildlife Trust and Woodland Trust Scotland
- Our recent three-day exhibition and evening Reception at Holyrood drew expressions of support from many MSPs

#### Local Campaigns

- There are currently two specific proposals from local communities for National Parks in their areas
- The [Campaign for a Borders National Park](#) will shortly publish a full-scale professionally researched and written feasibility study for its proposed National Park, funded by the Big Lottery Fund’s Investing in Ideas programme
- The Galloway National Park Association is preparing a full-scale feasibility study for its area and has the support of Dumfries and Galloway Council, which in 2016 published the report [A Galloway National Park ...?](#)

#### Further Information

Please contact John Mayhew on [scnp.aprs@gmail.com](mailto:scnp.aprs@gmail.com) or 07787 195690

SCNP promotes the protection, enhancement and enjoyment of National Parks, potential National Parks and other nationally outstanding areas worthy of special protection. SCNP is a registered Scottish charity, No SC031008. [www.scnp.org.uk](http://www.scnp.org.uk)

APRS promotes the care of **all** of Scotland’s rural landscapes. APRS is a registered Scottish charity, No SC016139. [www.aprs.scot](http://www.aprs.scot)

[Scottish National Parks Strategy Project](#)